

WANTED—A FINAL SOLUTION OF THE JAPANESE PROBLEM.

**WANTED - A FINAL SOLUTION OF THE
JAPANESE PROBLEM.**

Hamilton Holt.

It is so difficult to find a solution to the Japanese problem that it is likely to date up to the end of the century. The briefest glance at the history of the two nations has led up to the present day. It is a situation which suggests a remedy that, if applied, might restore the ancient friendship so long desired by all good people of both countries.

On March 31, 1854, Commodore Perry, in behalf of the United States, signed with Japan a treaty of commerce and friendship which opened Japan to the

WANTED—A FINAL SOLUTION OF THE JAPANESE PROBLEM

By HAMILTON HOLT

Editor of the Independent

If the Pacific Ocean is to be the theatre of the world's future civilization, then there is no nation on the face of the earth with whom it is more important for the United States to be on cordial terms than Japan. At present the historic friendship between these two great powers is strained. Indeed, the situation is so delicate that unless it is handled rightly it is likely to flare up at almost any time. Let me briefly trace, therefore, the series of events that have led up to the present untoward situation and then suggest a remedy that, if applied, ought to restore the ancient friendship so much desired by all good citizens of both countries.

On March 31, 1854, Commodore Perry, in behalf of the United States, signed with Japan a treaty of commerce and friendship which opened Japan to the

world and inaugurated the most remarkable political and social revolution known to history. The first sentence of that treaty reads as follows:

“There shall be perfect, permanent, and universal peace and a sincere and cordial amity between the United States of America on the one part and the Empire of Japan on the other, and between their people respectively without exception of persons and places.”

From that day to this Japan has lived up to the letter and spirit of that treaty. She has never let an opportunity pass to express her gratitude and to show her friendly feelings to the United States. She has sent her brightest young men to be trained in our universities and technical schools. She has employed many Americans within the empire as advisers, teachers and administrators. Even at this moment an American citizen, Mr. Dennison, is serving as chief adviser of the Foreign Office.

The United States had an equally unblemished record for cordiality to Japan until the close of the Russo-Japanese War. Then the change began. I take no stock in the charge that the American war correspondents, whose work at the front was so restricted by the Japanese military authorities, started the anti-Japanese cry in a spirit of revenge. Nevertheless, all of a sudden statements began to appear in the Amer-

ican press that we would have to fight the Japanese. They were getting "cocky" as a result of their victories over Russia, and needed to be "taught a lesson." Besides, the periodical English and German war scares were beginning to experience the law of "diminishing returns" and our naval friends and ordnance manufacturers were under the necessity of conjuring up some new adversary against whom we needed the protection of a great and ever greater navy. Then came the law segregating the Japanese in the California schools, as if they were not fit to associate with white children. That stirred up Japan to strong protest, but it ended in Japan's stopping all emigration, so that even students find it difficult to come here to-day.

President Roosevelt, however, immediately after the California outbreak, sent the fleet on its voyage around the world, ostensibly on a "peace" cruise, but in reality to "impress" Japan. Japan turned the other cheek by spending a million dollars to entertain it. Here were a people who were brutally insulted by our Pacific Coast, a people we called "heathen" and sent missionaries to christianize, actually teaching us a lesson in Christian ethics. Though we all but drove them out of California, they met our officers and men, strewing their paths with flowers. Though we excluded them from our schools, they suffered their little children to greet us, singing our national hymn.

Japan has shown similar hospitality to our delega-

tions of merchants and others who have since visited her shores. Yet the pin pricks continued. Bills began to be introduced into the California Legislature aiming to drive the Japanese from the Coast and to prevent those already there from owning land or engaging in business.

Next came the report that Japan had a secret treaty with Mexico against us, and was to be allowed a Pacific port. That, of course, turned out to be a "fake." There were also the reported speeches of a member of Congress, formerly of the navy, declaring that Japan was preparing to declare war and seize the Philippines, Hawaii and the Pacific Coast. On February 25, 1911, nearly three years ago, Mr. Hobson, on the floor of the House, prophesied war with Japan within twenty months. Then came Secretary Knox's proposal for the neutralization of the Manchurian Railway, which would have deprived Japan of the rights on the mainland she had gained by the treaty of Portsmouth and have destroyed her preponderant influence on the border state facing her Korean frontier.

Next appeared a scheme of American capitalists to build the Chinchow-Aigun Railway, to rival the South Manchurian Railway, in China. This was followed shortly by the proposal from bankers, originating here, that a syndicate representing four Powers—the United States, England, France and Germany—should loan China \$50,000,000, the interest to be guaranteed by all

the unhypothecated resources of Manchuria, thus dethroning Japan from her primacy in Manchuria and all China. Though the Knox neutralization plan and the American railroad scheme fell through, and the bankers controlling the four-Power loan subsequently invited Japan and even Russia to join their circle, these proposals made a very bad impression in Japan.

Then, in the early part of 1912, a measure known as the Dillingham bill was favorably reported to the Senate by the Committee on Foreign Relations, which would have excluded the Japanese from our shores as the Chinese are now excluded. Fortunately, the exposure of the "joker" in the bill led to a modification of the anti-Japanese clause. But in the meantime the news had been cabled to Japan and the harm done.

Immediately upon that, Senator Lodge revived the Magdalena Bay war scare by charging that Japan was seeking concessions in Mexico, in violation of the Monroe Doctrine. Although it is well known that Magdalena Bay was in the rainless belt of lower California, in a region in which nothing grows except cactus and a few stunted cedars, and that a single spring among the sand dunes was the sole water supply of the diminutive fishing village on its shores, the Senate passed a resolution to the effect that the Monroe Doctrine applied to such cases. The Senate also, in emasculating the great Taft-Knox peace treaties with England and France, gave Japan another slap by adopting

an amendment reserving from arbitration the question of the "admission of aliens to the educational institutions of the several states."

But early in 1913 our insults reached their climax. Some forty anti-Japanese bills were introduced into the California legislature. Some of these provided for increasing the license fees of Japanese fishermen from \$10 to \$100, for the segregation of Japanese school children throughout the state, and for the imposition of a special poll tax upon the Japanese. Others prohibited the Japanese from employing white girls, from using power engines, and from taking out liquor licenses. But by far the most offensive was the Webb bill which was passed by the legislature in May and provided in effect that aliens not eligible to citizenship could not acquire or hold any land in the state. The object of this law was avowedly to exclude the Japanese from participation in a liberty which had previously been freely accorded them and which is still freely accorded to other aliens. The measure took effect August 10, despite the strenuous protest of the Federal Government and the almost unanimous opposition of the enlightened sense of the nation.

The Japanese are a very proud and sensitive people. That is known. They are also a very self-controlled people. That is not so well known. At first they were thunderstruck. Then they became angry. Then they controlled themselves.

After Mr. Bryan had returned from his unsuccessful mission to Sacramento, and the yellow journals had become less vociferous for war, the American people, with characteristic irresponsibility, promptly forgot Japan and her grievances and turned their attention to the Thaw case, the movies, baseball, turkey trotting, and Mexico. Mr. Wilson began his assiduous study of the tariff and the currency. Mr. Bryan went lecturing.

The Japanese, as I have said, are a proud, sensitive and self-controlled people. But the Japanese do not forget. Let no one for an instant imagine that time and indifference on our part will heal this latest wound.

Half a year has now elapsed. What is the present situation?

The world does not know what Viscount Chinda has asked of Mr. Bryan or what replies Mr. Bryan has made. It only knows that the Japanese Ambassador has frequently called on Mr. Bryan, and even President Wilson, and that apparently the two governments have not yet come to any mutually satisfactory conclusion.

Now there will be no war between Japan and the United States. That is unthinkable. But Japan has evidently felt that the time has come to settle this recurrent trouble once and for all, and she proposes to take up the whole case and lay her side before us. She is ready to do anything we ask, as she always has been ready, provided she can do it with honor.

There are two important questions involved in the present dispute. The one is legal, the other moral. The legal question is this: Does the existing treaty between Japan and the United States permit the Japanese to own land in the United States? There seems to be no reason why this should not be decided by the United States Supreme Court, or if both parties prefer, by the Hague Court. If the case should come before the Supreme Court, it is likely to be decided in favor of Japan. Under our constitution no state can deal directly with a foreign nation. All such powers inhere in the Federal Government. All aliens, therefore, stand on the same footing, as far as a state is concerned, and derive their rights primarily from international treaties.

If the case should go to the Hague Court, the decision would probably likewise be in favor of Japan. The equity is on her side, and the Court has already decided, in 1905, in the Japanese House Tax case, that a nation cannot change the tenure of property actually held without the consent of the alien owner.

But a mere legal decision, no matter which side won, would hardly prevent the recurrence of similar disputes in the future. The real question, therefore, is how the statesmen of Japan and America can devise a plan for permanent peace and good understanding between the two nations. In other words, how can they apply the golden rule to their mutual intercourse?

If it is a fact that nothing is ever settled until it is settled right, then the Japanese question will never be settled until the Japanese have the same rights of naturalization in the United States as the citizens of England, France and Germany. Japan has already become one of the five great world Powers measured by any qualitative test. In the virtues of patriotism, loyalty, alertness, thoroughness, self-control, physical bravery, personal cleanliness, æstheticism and politeness they excel us. Only in respect to the morality of business, the position of women, the organization of labor and the qualifications for suffrage they have something to learn from the western nations. Japan is, therefore, fairly entitled to recognition by us as an equal, with all the privileges such recognition implies. She is bound to receive it sooner or later. But no nation can put itself in the position of asking another to naturalize its citizens, any more than self-respecting parents can ask others to adopt their children. If Japanese citizens are to be given the privileges of naturalization in this country, the initiative must be taken by us. But this can hardly be expected at the present moment, or, I fear, for some time to come. Japanese naturalization is not a present issue.

What, then, can be done? All Japan wants is to be treated as an equal, not as an inferior. Her honor is dearer to her than all else. Any one who would understand Japan must never forget that the two policies

which her statesmen have pursued with unswerving constancy since the restoration of the late Emperor in 1868 are, first, to maintain her national integrity and independence, and second, to make her the equal of any civilized nation in existence. Japan does not care whether her citizens own land in California or not, but that they shall have the same privileges of owning land that other aliens do. Japan does not care to have her subjects emigrate to America. Korea, Manchuria and Formosa are the natural outlets for her surplus population.

Japan can be depended upon to do in the future what she has already done since 1907—to stop absolutely all emigration that we think undesirable. There is now an excess of Japanese returning home from the United States over Japanese coming to our shores by about three thousand a year. The latest statistics show that in 1911 the excess of Japanese laborers returning home over those coming here was 8,966, out of a total population of 70,000 in the Hawaiian Islands and 60,000 on the mainland. No laborers can now get passports to the United States except the wives and aged parents of those already here. Japan wants to keep her subjects at home to please us, and not because we refuse to receive them. What she cannot understand is how a mere 40,000 of her citizens, who have the highest standard of literacy on the Pacific slope, and who own but 17,000 acres of land

and whose numbers are decreasing every year, can be a menace to a population of 2,377,000 souls living in over one hundred million acres of territory.

What, then, would be a practical, reasonable and satisfactory solution of the present difficulty, pending the ultimate giving of full naturalization rights to the Japanese?

It is evident, I think, from what has been said that the Administration should forthwith negotiate a treaty with Japan granting to those Japanese permitted by their Government to come here the right to own land just as other aliens do. Japan should in return issue no passports to any class of her subjects we preferred not to receive.

By such a treaty and informal agreement Japan would gain the recognition she craves and California the relief from labor competition she fears.

Indeed, Japan would probably be wise enough to concede another point if such a treaty were entered into. On the principle that it is generally best to let sleeping dogs lie, she might well agree to let the treaty have reference only to the future, and not raise at all the constitutionality of the present Webb law. That has already done all the mischief it can. If an attempt is now made to make California back down, the whole states-rights question will be raised. There is little to be gained and much to lose by such a course, especially with the Democratic party in the saddle and the

Jeffersonian Mr. Bryan in the State Department. The only possible danger is that Mr. Wilson and Mr. Bryan will have to get the treaty confirmed by the Senate before it can become law. There are jingo Senators who would take the opportunity to do no little harm to the good relations of the two countries.

But Mr. Wilson and Mr. Bryan should take their chances with the Senate. A solemn duty to Japan requires it. Surely they cannot object in principle to such a treaty. Let the Senate take the responsibility, if it cares to, of straining still further an historic friendship.

The time to act is now. Already it is rumored that the California politicians are secretly boasting that when the next legislature meets they will pass measures to drive the Japanese absolutely out of the state.

Let the President, then, turn his attention to Japan and prove himself as great an international statesman as he has already proved himself a national statesman.

He has the opportunity.

January 10, 1914.

New York City.